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President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

High-level Review Meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Agenda item 20 (continued)

Sustainable development

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Draft resolution (A/65/L.2)

The President (*spoke in French*): I declare open the High-level Review Meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. This meeting is held in accordance with resolution 64/199 of 21 December 2009 and decisions 64/555 of 15 April 2010 and 64/566 of 13 September 2010.

I have chosen titles for each of my introductory statements. For this morning's meeting, I should like to suggest the following title: "In the family of nations, the most vulnerable deserve particular attention".

It is a great honour for me to take the floor as we conduct the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy. This week has been rich in meetings and discussions on environmental issues. I should like particularly to stress the appeal that was made at the high-level meeting on biodiversity to ensure that concrete measures are taken to slow the alarming loss of biodiversity across the globe. This was an important outcome for small island developing States, whose economies are highly dependent on industries such as fisheries and tourism.

Today, it is on the specific problems of small island developing States that we wish to concentrate our attention. Small, isolated and lacking resources, these States are also increasingly exposed to global environmental crises. Tsunamis, earthquakes and other natural disasters affect them in a totally disproportionate manner. Years and even decades of development can be simply erased. The threat of rising sea levels to low-lying atolls can leave nobody indifferent.

In the face of these challenges, in 1994 in Barbados the international community adopted the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In 2005, that Programme was enhanced by the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy. Since then, major progress has been made in those countries to preserve the environment. I note with pleasure that the Millennium Development Goal concerning the environment is on the way to being achieved. But the overall state of affairs is less promising. Indeed, for other objectives, particularly poverty reduction, the battle is far from won.

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We will devote the next two days to reviewing the progress and difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. That should allow us to move ahead, and I hope that this discussion will lead to an enhanced political will to reduce the vulnerabilities of the small island developing States. I call on members to reflect on ways of providing international support in a coordinated manner and to establish partnerships, because in the family of nations the most vulnerable deserve particular attention. I hope that these discussions will be productive.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I am pleased to join the President of the General Assembly in welcoming participants to the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy. Adopted in 2005, the Strategy sets forth actions and strategies for advancing the sustainable development needs of small island developing States. Nineteen priority areas are addressed in it, including the original themes of the Barbados Programme of Action adopted in 1994. We are here to review progress made towards achieving the goals of the Mauritius Strategy, and to examine what gaps remain and how we can address them with urgency and efficiency.

The international community has long recognized the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States (SIDs). These arise from intrinsic characteristics — their small size, isolation, narrow resource base, limitations on economies of scale, and high exposure to global environmental threats.

In the past five years, these States have suffered, like all countries, from the financial, food and energy crises. They have also been especially vulnerable to climate change. Some small islands have experienced loss of agricultural land and infrastructure already. There have been negative impacts on the fishing and tourism industries, loss of biodiversity, saltwater intrusion and degradation of terrestrial and wetland habitats, and destruction of human settlements. Some people have lost their livelihoods and felt negative impacts on their health and access to fresh water. With the threat of rising sea levels, some people have even emigrated to build lives elsewhere.

We have seen some progress made in redressing these problems through the Mauritius Strategy. The political commitment of each State to sustainable development has increased. National plans and policies now reflect key principles of sustainable development, as set out in the Mauritius Strategy. Several countries have embarked on economic reforms to enhance their resilience to the impacts of globalization. The strengthening of regional institutional frameworks has been noted in some subregions. Commodity exporters in some small islands have seen growth in trade opportunities. The export growth of resource-poor islands, however, remains well below the world average.

On the whole, however, SIDs still lack sufficient access to financing for the dramatic changes they need to make, including for achieving their targets in the Millennium Development Goals. They also need increased financial assistance to cope with external shocks. In view of their small size and limited capacity, we need to simplify and streamline financing mechanisms, especially during and after natural disasters such as the one we saw in Haiti.

The review processes at the national and regional levels have emphasized the need for SIDs to mainstream climate change adaptation plans into national development strategies. They also need increased access to low-carbon technologies and technology transfer initiatives. They need improved data collection and information systems to facilitate informed decision-making. Let us use this meeting today to devise new ways of approaching and redressing these issues.

The United Nations is committed to supporting small island developing States at the international policy level and on the ground through its agencies and technical cooperation projects. As we begin this meeting following the successful completion of the high-level events on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the International Year of Biodiversity, let us bear in mind the synergies between these intergovernmental meetings and processes. Progress in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy will bring us closer to the achievement of the MDGs and biodiversity goals, and vice versa. I wish the General Assembly a successful meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I should like to turn to some organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the High-level Review Meeting. With regard to the length of statements, I remind members that, in accordance with

decision 64/566, statements will be limited to five minutes. I appeal to all speakers to respect that time limit because we have a very busy day ahead of us and we would like to give every speaker on the list the same opportunity to give their message. In the light of that given time frame, I appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation may be provided properly, but to respect the five-minute time limit. To assist speakers in managing their time, a light system has been installed on the speaker's rostrum. I appeal for the cooperation of all speakers in observing the time limit on their statements.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Marcus Stephen, President of the Republic of Nauru, who will speak on behalf of the small island developing States.

President Stephen: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDs) represented at the United Nations: the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Nauru. The Pacific SIDs align themselves with the statements to be delivered by the Honourable Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, and the Honourable Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of Vanuatu, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

It is clear that SIDs have had meaningful achievements, and I commend those countries that have made progress towards sustainable development. I also want to thank our development partners working in the Pacific for their dedicated support.

Regrettably, progress towards sustainable development has been considerably below expectations overall. In the absence of concrete targets in the Mauritius Strategy, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) offer useful insight. While some countries are on track to meet some of their MDGs, most Pacific SIDs are severely lagging behind other groupings. Most alarmingly, the vast majority of Pacific SIDs are not on track to reduce basic-needs poverty. In some countries, the level of poverty incidence may have actually increased. Our vision from Barbados has not been realized. I say this not to minimize the considerable work done by all members of our global community, but because I want to be very clear about the gravity of the situation facing SIDs.

The major obstacle to progress is the lack of understanding on the part of the international community regarding the many vulnerabilities that are unique and particular to SIDs. Our special combination of geographical, economic and environmental characteristics makes many of our development challenges especially complex and severe. This includes isolation from major markets, small population sizes and economies, vulnerability to natural disasters, fragile fresh water supplies, narrow resource bases, costly infrastructure, and extreme vulnerability to climate change and sea-level rise.

Today, SIDs are seeking concrete action, and I call on the international community to create a formal SIDs category with structural support mechanisms in the areas of trade and finance. These mechanisms should specifically address the vulnerabilities of SIDs. We ask the Secretary-General to lead this process so that it receives the attention it deserves.

Adequate financial support is necessary to enable the sustainable development of our islands. We face major obstacles in accessing international finance owing to eligibility criteria that do not always accommodate small-scale projects. In addition, the application and monitoring requirements are often beyond our limited capacity. Moreover, official development assistance remains short of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income — a goal set 40 years ago by this body. The global economic crisis should not deter developed countries from providing the assistance necessary to alleviating poverty and meeting their commitments. A small amount saved today will end up costing all of us much more tomorrow. Some of us are already paying a high price in terms of human suffering. In the words of the Secretary-General, "We should not balance budgets on the backs of the poor" (*A/65/PV.3*).

This review has also highlighted serious shortcomings in United Nations institutional assistance to SIDs. Earlier this year, the Committee for Development Policy analysed United Nations support for SIDs and concluded that it had insufficient information regarding the work of several organs and bodies of the United Nations and the World Bank. For those agencies that have been working on SIDs-related issues, the extent to which their work was guided by the Barbados Programme of Action or the Mauritius Strategy was not clear. It is essential that we critically and comprehensively evaluate United Nations support

for SIDs, which should include a review of the mandates of the specialized agencies. The Pacific SIDs consider this to be an essential element of the political declaration that we will adopt tomorrow.

The Pacific SIDs are highly dependent on marine resources for food security and economic growth, yet these resources are being depleted by actions beyond our control. While the Pacific has shown leadership in marine biodiversity conservation through the creation of protected areas, our efforts need to be complemented by the elimination of global overfishing and destructive fishing practices. We also require foreign investment in our small fishing industries so that we can receive a more equitable share of the economic benefit from our valuable fish stocks. This proposal would assist in our economic self-sufficiency.

We cannot talk meaningfully about sustainable development without also addressing climate change. There is a concerted effort in some quarters to lower expectations, not only for the sixteenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancún, but for the UNFCCC process in general. This is deeply alarming and jeopardizes sustainable development prospects, and in many cases the very survival of Pacific SIDs. I ask all nations, developed and developing alike, to arrive in Cancún ready to make progress on a fair solution that will ensure the survival of our islands.

As leaders, we have a responsibility to protect the security and well-being of our people. We cannot fail them on this critical issue. We must also ensure that all United Nations organs, including the Security Council, respond actively to the climate crisis. Earlier this year, the Pacific SIDs wrote to members of the Security Council, asking them to put climate change on their agenda in accordance with the resolution this body adopted last year. As the primary organ of the United Nations entrusted with preserving international peace and security, the Security Council must have a role in responding to the climate change crisis.

In conclusion, I extend a warm invitation to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to visit the Pacific and see first-hand the realities of what life is really like in our islands and why we urgently need a formal SIDs category and an ambitious agreement on climate change that provides our islands with a realistic prospect of survival.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada, who will speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Mr. Thomas (Grenada): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 43 States members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). AOSIS wishes to associate itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I am honoured to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixth-fifth session. Let me assure you of the unconditional support of AOSIS as you guide these important and crucial deliberations towards a fruitful and tangible conclusion. I also take this opportunity to extend our thanks and appreciation to Her Excellency Ms. Sylvie Lucas and His Excellency Mr. Vanu Gopala Menon, Permanent Representatives of Luxembourg and Singapore to the United Nations, respectively, for their excellent leadership as co-facilitators to lead the informal consultations of the draft political declaration (A/65/L.2) on the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation to be adopted at the end of this high-level meeting.

We would also like to renew our support to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and to thank him for fulfilling resolution 62/191, which again pointed to the continued high vulnerability of small island developing States (SIDs) to external shocks, the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters, and the setbacks experienced as a result of the recent global food, fuel and financial crises.

As AOSIS approaches its twentieth anniversary, we have had the opportunity carefully to review our progress within the context of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, and it is not encouraging. The goal of my statement today is to draw attention to key areas of the Strategy where our requests to development partners have been denied. The truth is that we have great difficulty understanding why these requests were denied given the current suite of sustainable development challenges facing small islands.

According to the Secretary-General's report on the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation:

> "Increasing debt burdens have been causes for concern in a number of small island developing States, especially in the Caribbean... Public debt levels are also very high, above 100 per cent of GDP in several cases. In contrast to the least developed countries and certain other groups, the small island developing States that are not listed among the least developed countries have not qualified for debt relief assistance and are increasingly considered ineligible for development aid." (*A/65/115, para. 41*)

Some of us have put mechanisms in place at the regional level to help promote business development, including a $250-million development fund created in 2008 by the Caribbean SIDs. However, the lack of capacity has constrained the access of SIDs to international financing mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility and the clean development mechanism.

We in SIDs consider climate change to be public enemy number one. AOSIS was formed to provide a vehicle to help us fight for our very survival. It was crystal clear to our members that if we did not agitate for a legally binding agreement to slow or stem global warming, we could all face disappearance below the sea, like our brothers and sisters from parts of Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Maldives islands. It is as if many of us are already in the departure lounge of destruction; that is how serious the matter is.

That is why we feel disregarded when we are told that our disappearance is something for the future. We say "no" to that belief. The fact is that our disappearance from the globe is happening right now. We stood by helplessly in 1999 and watched the disappearance of islands in Tuvalu, and today we are sadly seeing the disappearance of burial grounds near the coast of the Marshall Islands and in Grenada. It is a fact that the SIDs are likely to be the largest economic losers, with large displaced populations if average global temperatures increase beyond 1.5° C from pre-industrial levels. Such increases would correspond to greenhouse gas concentrations beyond 350 parts per million, which is considered the threshold for the continued survival of ecosystems essential to livelihoods in small island States.

We believe that the 192 parties should continue the debate on a long-term temperature target and a specific time frame in which it must be achieved. We also again request the preparation of a report based on the best scientific evidence available on the impacts of the survival of SIDs and other vulnerable countries from a 2° C average increase in global temperature above pre-industrial levels.

One hundred and six States members of this body support the call to keep the average temperature increase below 1.5° C, and of the remaining countries, 41 are undecided. This means that more than 147 countries are not supporting the 2° C limit, and yet we cannot get an agreement on a scientific study for the 1.5° C — a study, not a policy, not a binding agreement, not a resolution. The question is: Why is there opposition to the study and why has this request been denied? In our view, completing such a study would be a win-win proposition for all parties.

Based on more recent scientific evidence, the time for significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to occur is now. According to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) global greenhouse gas emissions must be on a downward trajectory by 2015. Therefore, we ask that the resolution to be adopted at this sixty-fifth session include the fact that SIDs need 1.5° C to stay alive. The tagline "1.5° to stay alive" must be considered as one of the most serious statements offered for consideration at this session of the General Assembly.

Finally, on the issue of climate change, I ask that we pause to keep in mind and thought the current suffering and death from weather-related events that our brothers and sisters across the globe are facing, from Pakistan to China, from the Marshall Islands to Central America and beyond, and in Russia.

Despite having vast renewable energy resources, including our tropical oceans, our largest natural resource, we are yet to derive significant benefits from their use, and thus far we have missed opportunities and have made very limited progress in successfully transferring key technologies to develop these resources.

SIDs more than any other group have the highest energy costs in the world because of our more than 90 per cent dependency on imported petroleum for our survival. Far too frequently these days, we find ourselves defending our unique and particular

vulnerabilities, which require a special case for development. We are therefore very disappointed that the request for consideration of a special United Nations category for SIDs was also denied. We are, however, encouraged by the statements made by some of our partners supporting our special and unique vulnerabilities.

The Mauritius Strategy for Implementation review shows a clear need for accountability and to consolidate the existing responsibilities of the various United Nations institutional entities that share responsibility for supporting the sustainable development of SIDs. We need to put an end to the business-as-usual institutional arrangement. Absent at the moment is an effective coordination mechanism that links the work in SIDs of various agencies tasked with implementation. It is recognized that while the Small Island Developing States Unit is or has been undergoing reorganization, it has very limited operational capacity within the SIDs. In this regard, we look forward to the Secretary-General's report on how the current United Nations system could be better organized more effectively to support sustainable development in small island developing States.

The President: Mr. Prime Minister, I would ask you to come to a conclusion. You have already used double the time allowed to a speaker.

Mr. Thomas (Grenada): Mr. President, we wish you a very productive presidency, which we know will have an agenda that will certainly require your full and utmost attention. As you guide these deliberations to a close, we ask that issues affecting SIDs, particularly those mentioned earlier, be iterated and supported with appropriate action, and that this will be reflected at this sixty-fifth session in the new political declaration (A/65/L.2) crafted by the members of the General Assembly. May we move forward with our best efforts and the much-needed support of our partners.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, who will speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Mr. Natapei (Vanuatu): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum. At the outset, allow me to convey our appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this high-level conference on the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. Allow me also to align my statement on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDs) with the address made by the Honourable Mr. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

It is timely that this conference is being held back-to-back with the 10-year review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), given its inextricable link with the Mauritius Strategy as a programme for how small island developing States might be supported in achieving the targets of the MDGs and other sustainable development goals, despite the significant challenges before us.

In view of the time constraints, I will go straight to the points raised in my statement. The Mauritius Strategy review for the Pacific SIDs concluded that while performance has been good in terms of efforts at the national and regional levels to implement the Strategy, the vulnerability of Pacific SIDs — as underscored by the impacts of the global economic crisis, climate change and natural disasters — is increasing while their ability to cope is not. This conclusion is partly drawn from the Asia-Pacific regional MDG report of 2009-2010, which shows that the Pacific is one of the least successful performers in the Asia-Pacific region regarding the MDGs and remains the most vulnerable.

There are many reasons for this, including capacity and institutional constraints and governance arrangements. But they also include many inherent peculiarities of the Pacific SIDs, such as isolation, small area and population sizes, lack of resources, the high frequency of natural disasters, and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. These challenges and vulnerabilities have been compounded by the recent fuel, food and financial crises and will continue to worsen with the impacts of climate change.

The Mauritius Strategy review has identified the following issues and priorities, in particular for Pacific SIDs: climate change; fossil fuel dependency; natural disasters; infrastructure, transport and information and communications technology; the least developed countries graduation; fisheries; national development planning; the Pacific Plan; development assistance; South-South cooperation; and external trade. I have merely listed the issues, but I hope that the details can be included in the statement later.

As for the role of institutions, the Mauritius Strategy review calls on the United Nations and Pacific regional organizations to work more collaboratively in the further implementation of the Strategy. In the Pacific region, the development and implementation of the Pacific Plan, endorsed by leaders in 2005, has taken on the role of facilitating the implementation of the Strategy, with a particular focus on strengthening regional cooperation and integration.

It remains for me then respectfully to ask our international partners, friends and family of Pacific SIDs to put the political declaration (A/65/L.2) into action and, in doing so, to recognize that while SIDs share many common challenges and inherent constraints, we also have our individual peculiarities and thus, ultimately, must be supported from the ground up. Our own national plans and capacity should, wherever possible, be the focus of our partners' engagement. Our own regional policies and institutions should be the focus wherever there is merit in gaining more through regional approaches. Finally, when our partners contribute to global efforts and programmes, they should be sure to reflect the particular and special needs of SIDs so that there is a level playing field for all of us, large or small, isolated or linked to the rest of the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Alsaidi, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Yemen, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen): I have the distinct honour and privilege to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to this High-level Review Meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the convening of this High-level Meeting to review progress in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The Group of 77 and China remains concerned, however, that despite the acknowledged, unique and particular vulnerabilities of the small island developing States, insufficient steps have been taken at the international level to address their vulnerability and to support their sustainable development.

In Barbados in 1994 and Mauritius in 2005, developed countries committed themselves to providing increased levels of financial support, technology transfer and capacity-building to support the sustainable development of small island developing States. However, these promises and commitments remain largely unfulfilled. The Group of 77 and China remains concerned over the state of implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. Despite the progress made by small island developing States at the national and regional levels in building the institutional capacity for sustainable development by formulating strategies and action plans and carrying out policy reforms, they nevertheless continue to encounter many serious problems and constraints that have slowed down or impeded the process of implementation.

As the Secretary-General has stated, several small island developing States are not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and some have even regressed. In particular, the impact of the multiple global crises continues to threaten progress and has further widened growing socio-economic disparities in many small island developing States. There is no doubt that the challenges faced by the small island developing States have become more, not less, complex in the past few years.

Small island developing States continue to be particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and their resource constraints are exacerbated by growing population pressures, climate change and the continuous rise of sea levels, which pose a significant risk to small island developing States in their efforts to achieve sustainable development, and, for some, represent the gravest of threats to their survival and viability.

Moreover, the lack of financial, technical and human resources, relative to the enormous scale of the tasks to be accomplished, represents a common challenge faced by small island developing States across all regions. Many critically needed infrastructure projects that require large investments — such as in air and maritime transport, adaptation to climate change and sea-level rise, waste management, energy, tourism infrastructure, and road and

telecommunications infrastructure — lie beyond the resources of most small island developing States.

The negative impact of the global financial and economic crisis has been particularly devastating to small island developing States, given their openness to the global financial and economic system and high dependence on a narrow range of income-generating sectors, such as tourism.

The Group of 77 and China urges all development partners, in particular developed countries, to honour and urgently scale up all commitments related to the small island developing States, and in particular to the provision of new and additional financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building. That will be necessary if small island developing States are to achieve the objective of sustainable development, as set out in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. In view of the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States, the Group also urges the international community and the United Nations system to support their to achieve sustainable development through the full and effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Heinz Fischer, Federal President of the Republic of Austria.

President Fischer: Let me first underline that I fully associate myself with the statement that will be given shortly by Her Excellency Lady Ashton on behalf of the European Union.

Austria highly values today's High-level Review Meeting as an opportunity to conduct a thorough assessment of the progress made, lessons learned and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and the Barbados Programme of Action. We are, after all, optimistic that the political declaration to be adopted at this event (A/65/L.2) will create new momentum for tackling the challenges that small island developing States (SIDs) face. The political declaration reaffirms our commitment to the Mauritius Strategy and launches important analytical work that will make economic, social and environmental progress more measurable.

According to the Secretary-General's report on the review of the Mauritius Strategy (A/65/115), the picture five years after the Mauritius conference is mixed. The greatest challenge to the sustainable development and, in the case of some lower-lying countries, even the survival of SIDs is climate change. While small island developing countries are not responsible for the causes of the problem, SIDs are among the first to confront its adverse impacts, such as environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, increased water scarcity and rising sea levels. Austria remains committed to combating climate change by working towards an ambitious, comprehensive and legally binding treaty as soon as possible.

Climate protection, as we all know, is closely linked with other areas of development cooperation. Therefore, Austrian Development Cooperation treats climate change as a cross-cutting issue, integrated into programmes and projects in various sectors.

Energy is one of the sectors closely linked to climate change and the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Access to clean and renewable energy is key to ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development. Thus, energy is one of the priority sectors of Austrian Development Cooperation. In our bilateral programmes and projects, we are especially focusing on renewable energy and energy efficiency. Within the United Nations, we have been pushing for greater recognition of energy in the context of development policy and cooperation for many years. We therefore strongly support the Secretary-General's global campaign to ensure universal access to energy by 2030. In addition, Austria supports the work of UN-Energy both through staff secondment and through our advocacy. The work of Director-General Kandeh Yumkella is very much appreciated in Austria.

Austria is also one of the countries supporting the Global Energy Assessment, an initiative established by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis. In our cooperation with SIDs, we have, for example, forged a successful Pacific partnership, together with Italy and the city of Milan, which is delivering concrete renewable energy projects on the ground based on national priorities. This programme, which started in 2007, has been prolonged for a further three years.

Let me conclude by assuring you, Mr. President, that Austria is committed to participating in international efforts to strengthen cooperation with small island developing States and to have their special

needs integrated into the main international events and negotiations.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Danny Faure, Vice-President of the Republic of Seychelles, who will speak on behalf of Africa, the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regions.

Mr. Faure (Seychelles): Seychelles associates itself with the statements made by the Prime Minister of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS); by the Permanent Representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; and by the President of Nauru on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDs).

The five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation comes at a time when, as I said in my speech at the Millennium Development Goals summit (see A/65/PV.5), many small island developing States are wondering how they are going to build further on what they have achieved without getting further mired in unsustainable debt. That is why Africa, the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regions call on the international community to conduct a thorough assessment of the progress made, lessons learned and constraints encountered in implementing the Mauritius Strategy and to agree on what needs to be done to further address the vulnerabilities of SIDs.

In the meantime, we continue to argue that the inherent vulnerabilities and priority concerns of Africa, the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regions and of SIDs elsewhere, such as those related to small size and isolation, which cannot be changed, have to be factored into the multilateral development agenda and work programmes. There is also a need for the special circumstances of SIDs to be considered in the international governance review processes, including in the context of the planned United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012.

Africa, the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regions therefore welcome the initiative of the Indian Ocean Commission and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to work out a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that could be extended to cover all SIDs. Our islands also call for a review of the United Nations system's support to SIDs, accompanied by the integration of the SIDs-related issues into the work programmes of all United Nations agencies. The gross domestic product or gross national income per capita criteria that currently govern the international aid delivery system disqualify most SIDs from accessing concessionary financing. Africa, the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regions argue that this is misleading and does not reflect the multifaceted challenges associated with our economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities.

On climate change, funding for adaptation remains a challenge giving rise to the idea of an African, Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regional implementation programme on climate change and development that could learn from the experiences of the Caribbean and Pacific SIDs. The programme could primarily focus on the establishment of an African, Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regional centre of excellence for climate change and development and the implementation of pilot programmes for adaptation and low-carbon development programmes at the national and local levels.

At this stage, Seychelles would like to echo the call of the Chair of AOSIS for the global temperature increase to be kept well below 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels, and for greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to be kept well below 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide equivalent. I must humbly alert everyone in this Hall today that the small island developing States will never tire of repeating this. How can we do so, when the AOSIS mantra of "1.5 to stay alive" means exactly what it says?

A special challenge for us in Africa, the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regions that is not faced by the Caribbean or Pacific islands is that we do not have a regional organization to bring us together so that we can defend and promote our interests as a group. The island developing States of Africa, the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean regions are situated as far afield as the Atlantic Ocean off West Africa, the Western Indian Ocean off East Africa, the Eastern Indian Ocean and South Asia. Our islands thus feel the need for an intraregional mechanism to support us in our countries' respective national pursuit of sustainable development and to facilitate the development of regional programmes, initiatives and partnerships.

Allow me to end with an appeal for the international community to fulfil its commitment to the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. On Wednesday, at the end of the Millennium Development Goals summit, we heard world leaders — from Chinese

Premier Mr. Wen Jiabao to American President Barack Obama — call on developed countries to fulfil their commitments in good faith and to put an end to hollow promises that are not kept. The small island developing States ask that the international community do the same for the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Naoto Kan, Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Kan (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a pleasure for me to have had the opportunity today to meet and speak in person with so many leaders of small island developing States (SIDs) with which Japan has created partnerships in a wide range of fields. Once again, I wish to pay a deep tribute to the organizers of this High-Level Review Meeting.

Overcoming the vulnerabilities of SIDs remains a challenge that the international community urgently needs to address. Japan is an island country consisting of four major islands and more than 6,800 islets. Japan and small island countries have inherited from our ancestors beautiful scenery, the blessings of bountiful oceans, unique biodiversity and indigenous cultures. Because the people of Japan are islanders ourselves, we want to help our friends, the people of SIDs, overcome their vulnerabilities and achieve sustainable development. I should like to express Japan's resolve in that regard and touch on the efforts Japan has made to promote the sustainable development of SIDs, with particular emphasis on measures relating to natural disasters and climate change. I also wish to reaffirm our determination to make progress on this issue.

Many SIDs are located in disaster-prone areas and continue to be wracked by earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes and other natural calamities. The enormous damage caused by the earthquake in Haiti in January only served to remind us of the magnitude of the damage a small island State can suffer when a major disaster strikes. Immediately after the earthquake, Japan dispatched disaster relief teams to the stricken area, followed by a unit of Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) consisting of approximately 330 engineers, which was sent to assist the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. The SDF unit remains in Haiti, engaged in reconstruction work, including the removal of debris and road repairs. Japan will also implement swiftly and effectively the approximately $100 million in assistance it previously announced it would provide for Haiti's reconstruction. At the State and regional levels, efforts to build a disaster-resistant country will be important. Japan has much experience in fighting disasters and will continue to support countries stricken by disaster.

SIDs are particularly vulnerable to climate change. The rise in the sea level is a serious challenge and in many instances a threat to their very existence. Japan has been deeply moved by the urgent appeals of these island States and believes that assistance to SIDs must be one of the highest priorities of the international community in addressing climate change. The international community as a whole needs to act to counter the impact of climate change. To that end we must establish a fair and effective international framework in which all major economies participate. It hardly needs to be pointed out that SIDs need such a framework even more desperately than do other countries. For its part, Japan will cooperate with SIDs to ensure the success of the sixteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will be held in Mexico at the end of this year.

In the spirit of partnership, Japan attaches importance to engaging in dialogue with SIDs so that the assistance it provides will accord with their individual needs and priorities. Thus, we have extended assistance for the self-help efforts of Pacific Island countries, and hosted the Pacific Island leaders meeting five times since 1997. Next month in Tokyo, Japan will host an interim ministerial meeting in preparation for the sixth leaders meeting in 2012. Furthermore, on 2 September Japan and the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) held the second Japan/CARICOM ministerial level conference in Tokyo and agreed to further enhance our partnership.

Finally, Japan has been providing assistance to African SIDs, ensuring that their specific needs are reflected in the measures implemented as in the context of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process.

At the heart of this dialogue and cooperation with SIDs is the concept of human security, which Japan has vigorously promoted. Human security focuses on individual human beings who are seriously affected by the wide range of issues — the environment, health,

education — that are confronting small island developing States. It emphasizes the importance of addressing those issues comprehensively and promoting active cooperation among Governments, local authorities, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and private institutions.

Small island States have beautiful natural environments and age-old traditions they have inherited from their ancestors, and they need to preserve these assets into the future while also resolving the challenges they currently face. Japan will therefore continue to be a firm supporter of all small island developing States.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Kent, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Kent (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada welcomes this important opportunity to focus on the progress made and the challenges remaining in addressing the vulnerabilities of small island developing States.

(*spoke in English*)

It has been five years since the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy, and while much has been accomplished, there is still work to be done. Today, we are here to help strengthen the ability of small island developing States to respond to their specific challenges through a renewed partnership between them and the international community. Canada recognizes that small island developing States have demonstrated their commitment to promoting sustainable economic and development principles in their development strategies. We applaud the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Canada is committed to helping small island States in their efforts through the provision of targeted assistance. For instance, Canada has provided $100 million to the World Bank Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience, targeting funding to the small island developing States in the Pacific, Caribbean, and Africa; $400 million for international climate change efforts this fiscal year, with support to the most vulnerable in mind; $20 million — the largest single contribution — for the World Bank's Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility; and $600 million over 10 years in development assistance to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region. Given our long-standing historical and cultural ties to the country, Canada has made aid to Haiti a particular priority, providing more than $500 million in assistance to the country.

As we all know, efforts at the national, bilateral and regional levels need to be complemented by effective international support. One of the key strengths of the United Nations is its broad network of experts, making it uniquely placed to address the concerns and vulnerabilities of small island developing States. We must work to ensure that the United Nations continues to provide strong leadership, and that the United Nations system gives due attention to and is an effective partner for small island developing States in their efforts for sustainable development.

In addition, all development actors, including the international financial institutions, regional development banks, the private sector and civil society, must work together. The private sector can play a particularly important role by encouraging private sector entrepreneurship and connection to markets in order to alleviate debt, create employment and facilitate economic integration. An example in this regard is our $20-million commitment to the Partnership for CARICOM Private Sector Development, which seeks to improve and support private sector participation and investment in key areas and to enable financial institutions to increase their provision of loans to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. Canada also supports the secretariats of CARICOM and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States in building their policy development capacity and strengthening the management of regional and subregional market integration.

In conclusion, it is only through cooperation and by working collectively to meet the objectives put forth in the Mauritius Strategy that small island developing States will continue to make progress towards its full implementation. As responsible members of the international community, we must work together, as well as with partners in the private sector, to address the challenges faced by small island developing States so that the objectives enshrined in the Mauritius Strategy can be realized.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Stefania Prestigiacomo, Minister of Environment, Land and Sea of Italy.

Ms. Prestigiacomo (Italy): Italy wishes to associate itself with the statement to be made by the High Representative of the European Union.

Five years ago in Mauritius, the international community made a number of commitments to meeting the sustainable development goals and priorities of the Barbados Programme of Action, recognizing that sustainable development must be the national responsibility of small island developing States (SIDs) and that the international community must provide financial and technical support for the success of the Strategy. The present review shows that these commitments have to some extent been fulfilled compatibly with constraints deriving from the global crises — such as the economic, energy and food crises — that have had and continue to have serious implications for geographically isolated SIDs.

Very positive results have indeed been achieved in all regions. Most SIDs have substantially increased their political commitments to sustainable development, as well as public awareness of their importance. They have made considerable efforts to integrate sustainable development principles into national development and sectoral strategies. Most SIDs have adopted policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation, which in some cases include the achievement of the carbon neutrality objective and envisage a robust promotion of renewable energy. SIDs have also shown strong leadership in the area of protection of biodiversity and achieved significant results in establishing protected marine, coastal and terrestrial areas.

In addition, the present review has shown that progress, although uneven among SID, has also been made in the areas of gender, health and education, as well as towards the achievement of environmental sustainability. We commend in particular the progress made in most regions for creating an enabling regional institutional framework aimed at maximizing national efforts in key areas, such as the containment of the climate change threat and the prevention and management of risks associated with natural disasters.

In terms of financing, the review has shown that, while on the one hand most SIDs have indeed used their own resources in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, on the other the international community has played an important role in support of these efforts by providing financial and technical assistance in key strategic areas.

Much, however, remains to be done. The review has clearly demonstrated that, in spite of the great efforts made, the results achieved are limited with respect to expectations. The global crises of the past five years have greatly contributed to the erosion of progress made. Climate change adaptation and sea-level rise remain among the greatest challenges to SIDs and a threat to their very existence.

Italy has long been aware of the indisputable injustice inherent in the fact that island States contribute the least to global climate change, yet are affected the most by its negative consequences. For this reason, we have concentrated our commitment to the sustainable development of SIDs in the area of climate change and related sectors. Italy has in fact supported a number of key initiatives, such as the establishment of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Climate Change Centre. The Centre has become a lead enabling regional institution and has laid the groundwork for a regional strategic approach to climate change.

Rising sea levels, together with the associated coastal erosion and salt-water intrusion, escalation in the frequency and intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes, and disruptions in rainfall and freshwater supply threaten the very existence of the CARICOM countries. Our hope is, of course, that the lessons learned from the establishment of the Centre and from the concrete actions taken by that institution will be valued by other regions seeking to maximize the impact of scarce national resources and to streamline the search for a solution to common threats.

In addition, while the international community is still debating the shape of the global agreement that will ensure the equitable participation of all in addressing climate change mitigation, Italy has begun to act by supporting a programme in the Pacific region that stands out as a pragmatic attempt to address the urgency of adaptation and a search for practical solutions to the great challenge of this century. The cooperation programme on climate change and renewable energy between Italy, Austria, the Municipality of Milan and the Pacific SIDs has become, after only three years of implementation, a successful model for international cooperation. The

programme is ongoing, and thus the lessons generated so far are preliminary.

Nevertheless, some important conclusions can already be drawn. We believe that the success of the programme is basically due to the strict application of the ownership principle, according to which the development strategy remains in the hands of national Governments. Within the general goal of adaptation to climate change and the development of renewable energy, each participating SIDs has established the priorities needed to build resilience vis-à-vis its own perception of national and local vulnerability. These priorities derive from the sustainable development policies and strategies established by the Pacific SIDs and are fully taken on board by the cooperation programme, which has been able to focus, since its inception, on the achievement of measurable, concrete results.

Italy will continue to be committed to the sustainable development of SIDs. We will spare no effort to ensure that the positive lessons that can be drawn from the success stories of the Italian programme can be repeated and strengthened by other bilateral and multilateral organizations seeking to maximize the impact of international aid programmes.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Juan Manuel Gómez-Robledo, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States.

Mr. Gómez-Robledo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a pleasure for me to speak of behalf of Mexico at this High-level Review Meeting. As incoming President of the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that will take place in Cancún, Mexico, later this year, I should like to address the challenges that small island developing States face as a result of climate change.

Mexico welcomes the declaration on progress in reducing the vulnerabilities of island States. As a developing country with more than 11,000 kilometres of coast, we share many of the challenges facing small island developing States. Their challenges are also ours. Addressing the threats arising from disasters and water scarcity, improving the management of waste and coastal and marine resources, and reducing the loss of biodiversity, while at the same time seeking to fulfil aspirations to development and combating climate change, are shared priorities. These are areas that require enhancing existing international cooperation projects and strengthening partnerships with small island developing States.

I recognize the role that small island developing States have played in positioning their challenges and expectations in the international agenda, as reflected in the adoption of the Barbados Programme of Action in 1994 and the Mauritius Strategy of 2005. However, we are concerned that the implementation of these collective decisions has been partial, to say the least. Mexico considers that the international community must honour our commitments and take concrete actions for the effective implementation of these proposals.

The food, energy and financial crises have further strengthened arguments in favour of promoting sustainable development in those countries. In a globalized world, meeting their challenges is meeting our own. I should like to acknowledge the constructive and lead role of small island developing States in the current negotiations on climate change. Their voices are a constant reminder of the tangible and serious risks of climate change, and of the urgency of reaching agreements on this matter.

As we all know, Mexico will short host the two conferences on climate change. In Cancún, we will have a unique opportunity to make substantial progress in our fight against climate change. We cannot afford to squander that opportunity. There are encouraging signs of progress in such key areas as adaptation, financing, technology transfer, capacity-building and reforestation. We must find a solution to these global challenges through a multilateral system in which all participate. We must not only adopt an ambitious, comprehensive and balanced package that will lead to effective action, but also establish the framework for a better implementation of the existing climate change regime.

We are in a critical phase of negotiations. Time is short. It is imperative to make effective use of the brief time available, moving past differences and irreconcilable positions. The worst scenario would be not to reach any agreement. The small island developing States will be the first to benefit if we do reach agreements to combat climate change. Negotiators require guidance from the ministers here

present. We shall take decisions and make compromises. At the end of the day, that is the only way we can make progress on the multilateral track. We cannot afford to wait. The scientific evidence is clear. As time goes by, the opportunities to achieve our goals will be fewer and the costs will be greater.

With the support of the entire international community and a pragmatic approach aimed at immediate action, Cancún 2010 could be the dawn of a new era of agreements on climate change. We must act with the sense of the urgency that the situation demands. We must avoid a situation where those procrastinating in fulfilling their obligations find new excuses to keep on doing so. Our vulnerability threatens substantive damage to infrastructure, the loss of human lives and, for many nations, a step backwards in their march towards development. It is also a threat to their very survival. Economically, it is not only better but less expensive to act without delay. With that in mind, we cannot delay reaching agreements in Cancún. The only missing piece in this scenario is political will. The time to demonstrate that political will is at the upcoming negotiations to take place in China a few days from now.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Mr. Sharma (Commonwealth of Nations): On behalf of the Commonwealth, I sincerely thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to speak today. Almost last is by no means least, because 26 of the Commonwealth's 54 member countries are small island developing States (SIDs), and because the Commonwealth can claim to have pioneered the very science of the small State. It has worked alongside its member States and with partners such as the World Bank. With the Bank, it produced two ground-breaking reports in 2000 and 2005 on the inherent vulnerabilities and strengths of small States, and particularly of remote islands. From the Caribbean and Mediterranean seas to the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans, this, then, is our constituency. Further, it is our place of work. From two countries central to our discourse, I shall present two examples of the transformative power of Commonwealth assistance, worth some £60 million, to small island developing States in the past five years.

First, I cite our support for the recasting of national export strategies — for instance, in being a partner with Mauritius in its diversification from being a mono-crop sugar economy to being a seafood hub, upmarket garments exporter and a centre for financial services, distance education and tourism. Secondly, I point to the Commonwealth support in trade and tourism — for instance, in helping Barbados to upgrade its trade facilitation systems to international standards, and also to bring local producers, entrepreneurs and communities into its national tourism strategy. A third example I could cite is the 2 million additional square kilometres of seabed that we have helped 14 of our member countries claim right here in the United Nations. Imagine the prospects and the livelihoods that these can yield.

For 30 years, starting long before Mauritius 2005 or Barbados 1994, the Commonwealth has been a trusted and active partner in the cause of small island developing States, both in speaking and in acting on their behalf. Yet their vulnerability persists. We knew this well before our current economic woes. Growth in Commonwealth small States has long lagged behind. In 2009, their real gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 1.74 per cent, compared with a 0.6 per cent contraction in the world economy and a 2.4 per cent growth in developing ones. Investment and remittances went down and inflation went up — in some countries doubling.

It is the Commonwealth's firm belief that the policies and programmes of the international financial institutions and of the international community as a whole need particularly to take the special vulnerabilities of the small island developing States into account in practical ways. Here, very briefly, are four.

First, and we believe foremost, SIDs need a way forward on trade, on which they are so dependent but in which they face great human, financial and institutional resource constraints. As the trade debate continues, the impact of smallness is not yet fully acknowledged. Some key small agenda objectives include achieving consensus on development-oriented international trade rules and ways to let small States bring their goods and services to larger markets.

Secondly, we need special debt-relief packages for SIDs, which are among the most highly indebted countries in the world — some with public-debt-to-GDP ratios of more than 100 per cent and many unable to access concessional financing. They also need

solutions to their challenges in accessing export finances and the money market.

Thirdly, SIDs need a stronger voice in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements. They are willing to meet the standards set by the international community, but if they are to do so — and thereby to benefit — they need to be given a reasonable time frame in which to meet their new requirements. They need to be part of the dialogue, not apart from it.

Fourthly, SIDs need access to climate change finance. For some Commonwealth countries, rising water levels pose an imminent threat that is, quite literally, existential. Many have taken proactive and principled first steps towards decarbonizing their own economies, despite being among the smallest emitters in the world, and yet most climate finance to date has passed them by. The Commonwealth is already working towards practical solutions; the wider world must, too.

The Commonwealth commits to working closely with the international community and with development partners to empower its and the world's small island developing States. By recognizing vulnerabilities and strengths alike, we can build resilience, and resilience will speed recovery and strengthen sustainability.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kenneth Baugh, Deputy Prime Minister of Jamaica, who will speak on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Mr. Baugh (Jamaica): I speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) represented at the United Nations. CARICOM delegations associate themselves with the statements delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the Prime Minister of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

CARICOM welcomes the convening of this High-level Review Meeting. We consider it opportune to review the gains achieved, the challenges faced and the gaps to be filled in the implementation of the 2005 Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

It is our hope that this Meeting will build on the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action, which remains the development blueprint for small island developing States (SIDs). It is no coincidence that this Meeting is being held in the same week in which our leaders deliberated on ways in which to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the target date of 2015. There is a symbolic relationship between the MDGs and the Barbados Programme of Action. Progress in achieving both the Programme of Action and the MDGs goes hand in hand. If the challenges facing small island developing States are not addressed within the holistic rubric of achieving the MDGs, then most small island States will be in danger of missing their MDG targets.

While SIDs have experienced some measure of progress, many aspects of the Mauritius Strategy still remain unfulfilled due to significant constraints affecting its implementation, which in several cases have only worsened with time. This is reflective of the capacity constraints — human, financial and technical — that continue to beset small island developing States. These constraints are made worse by the debilitating effects of successive waves of global crises that have buffeted our countries and have exposed our limited coping capabilities. Indeed, the inherent vulnerabilities of small island States make them the least resilient and the most susceptible to external shocks such as the food, energy, financial and environmental crises that in recent years have retarded the growth prospects and sustainable development of our countries.

The adverse effects of the economic and financial crises on small States are particularly felt in trade, investment, aid, tourism and remittance flows, which are critical to the economic livelihood of small island developing States. We acknowledge the assistance of the development partners and regional and multilateral institutions in helping SIDs to address these challenges and constraints. It is evident, however, that much more sustained attention and targeted action are needed to ramp up support for this group of countries. SIDs are highly motivated to help themselves, but in order to empower SIDs to bridge that existing gap and thereby increase their social and economic resilience, action on several fronts is required.

The first is development financing. Financial resources and investment in small island developing States are critical. We urge development partners to

fulfil their previous commitments in respect of financing. This should be additional to the resources especially earmarked for small island developing States. There must also be broader recognition of the vulnerabilities of small island developing States that have been categorized as middle-income countries. This represents a specific challenge for States such as Jamaica, as this categorization hinders access to sources of concessionary financing and restricts or even removes access to development financing. The use of gross domestic product or gross national income as an indicator is not an adequate measure of the state of development of the majority of SIDs. Other factors, such as high energy and transportation costs and vulnerability to natural hazards and disasters, must be included in this equation.

Second is debt sustainability. With a classification as middle- and high-income countries, these small States do not have access to international debt-relief initiatives. In this context, CARICOM once again urges international recognition of the underlying debt problem of highly indebted small island States so as to facilitate access to financing that can ensure debt sustainability and provide the necessary fiscal space for economic empowerment and capacity-building. This includes concessionary loans and grants and debt-for-equity swaps.

Third are expansion and access to export markets. We fully recognize that trade is key to the economic growth of small island States. A worrying factor for many States is persistent trade deficits, which have worsened since the financial crisis. Reversing this trend will require strategies to build up the productive capacities of SIDs, the diversification of markets and the development of small and medium enterprises, among others. It is important in this context that our development partners scale up their aid-for-trade initiatives to support the building of supply-side capacity and infrastructure. We also call for the conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations with continued focus on the development dimension.

Fourth is sustainable development. Support for the sustainable development of SIDs in all its dimensions must be at the core of our actions if we are meaningfully to address the multiple challenges facing them, as well as new and emerging concerns. Addressing poverty and investing in resources for development, including human and natural resources, is critical to attaining sustainable development.

Fifth are climate change adaptation and mitigation. A major challenge to the sustainable development of small island States is, of course, climate change. As we are all aware, small island States are the most affected by yet have contributed the least to the problem of climate change. Tackling the impact of climate change requires resources beyond the capabilities of most small island States to implement the necessary adaptation and mitigation measures. It requires the provision of adequate financing, support for adaptation, capacity-building and technology transfer, including the development of renewable energy sources and green technology.

Sixth is the strengthening of institutional support. CARICOM joins others in calling for a review of the United Nations systems delivery to SIDs. This evaluation should include ways in which to mainstream SIDs-related issues in the programmes of the United Nations. We also urge the provision of adequate financing and staffing to strengthen the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in order to ensure that appropriate attention is given to SIDs-related issues. At the same time, for Caribbean countries it is important that the regional coordinating mechanism of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean subregional headquarters in Port of Spain receive the requisite funding to allow it to carry out its mandate.

Many challenges continue to confront small island developing States. We are, however, optimistic that through continued partnership with the international community, small island developing States will be able significantly to overcome their challenges and chart a renewed course with the full implementation of various commitments contained in the Mauritius Strategy and the Barbados Programme of Action. It is our hope that this High-level Review will signal the start of a renewed partnership aimed at supporting the growth and sustainable development of small island developing States.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Ms. Ashton (European Union): I am delighted to be at this important meeting in order to demonstrate the European Union's commitment in support of development and the Programme of Action.

At this week's summit, we all agreed on facilitating steps to ensure that we will reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The European Union will continue to play its part in this important endeavour. In our new MDG initiative, the European Union will offer to the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries most committed and in need a targeted plan of up to €1 billion to achieve better results in meeting the most off-track Millennium Development Goals. The Mauritius Strategy provides a unique and exclusive cooperation framework. The European Union welcomes this and remains committed to supporting the implementation of its priorities.

Small island developing States (SIDs), not being a homogenous group, still face significant and quite diverse challenges. The report of the Secretary-General (A/65/115), while recording substantial progress, also notes that efforts to address gaps in the basic exposure and vulnerability of SIDs are still required.

The European Union has long-standing cooperation in place to help SIDs address their challenges — for example, the Global Climate Change Alliance, in which SIDs, together with least developed countries, are identified as the priority beneficiary group for cooperation on climate change. We have also established a coordinated series of measures that help to cushion the human impact of the economic crisis and boost economic growth in developing countries.

Climate change is one of the major challenges faced by small island developing States. It threatens the very existence of some islands, combining additional development challenges with potentially significant security challenges. In the climate negotiations, our ultimate goal remains an ambitious, comprehensive, legally-binding global framework. We encourage others to join us in this effort.

Members may rest assured that the European Union's commitment to fighting climate change has not diminished since Copenhagen. We have inscribed our 20-per cent pledge into law. We are willing to increase our target to 30 per cent, and this could be part of a second commitment period under Kyoto, but only if all developed countries and advanced developing countries do their fair share of emission reduction efforts and if we address properly the weaknesses currently undermining the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol.

We should follow the guidance of our heads of State under the Copenhagen Accord, supported by almost 140 countries accounting for more than 80 per cent of global emissions. Copenhagen is our compass and provides the basis for significant short-term and long-term financing of climate action. We are keeping our promises to provide €2.4 billion between 2010 and 2012 period for fast-start financing activities, with a balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation and with special emphasis on the least developed countries, small island States and Africa. For 2010, we have already confirmed pledges of €2.39 billion.

Let me conclude by reiterating the European Union's full engagement in this process. We are in this for the long haul.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Ambassador Frederick Barton, representative of the United States of America to the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Barton (United States of America): The United States applauds the progress small island developing States (SIDs) have made in fulfilling the Mauritius Strategy over the past five years. We appreciate the opportunity to reflect on progress made and we are proud of our robust partnerships with SIDs throughout the world. We look forward to working together to address the steps remaining to achieve the goals of sustainable development. In particular, the United States wants to highlight its partnering with SIDs on work in disaster preparedness, biodiversity and climate change.

The United States seeks to help SIDs build resiliency against both extreme natural events — such as hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes — and unknown future challenges. We work closely with our partners in the Caribbean and the Pacific to support the collection of data using sensors and satellites, recorders and buoys, weather balloons and water samples, and in using that data to conduct the research it takes to improve our collective understanding of the Earth systems we depend on and our ability to predict and forecast normal and extreme events.

Our SIDs partners are key to these efforts. The areas of our planet that are least observed are the large expanses of ocean. These areas are essential to our understanding of the climate system, and therefore to our ability to understand what we can expect from a changing climate, making it possible for us all to take

action to mitigate and adapt in the face of that change. That would not be possible without the active engagement of SIDs and regional collaboration in a global context.

The United States shares the SIDs' commitment to the preservation of biodiversity. The United States contributes more than $300 million annually to our development partners for biodiversity conservation. We applaud the strong leadership demonstrated by SIDs through their own efforts and by their focusing global attention on coral reefs and marine conservation through such initiatives as the International Coral Reef Initiative, the Micronesia Challenge and the Coral Triangle Initiative. The United States has supported the Global Island Partnership since its launch in 2006. We share the partnership's strategic priorities for integrating policy and action on island conservation and sustainable livelihoods, ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation, and addressing the threat of invasive alien species.

SIDs are especially vulnerable to the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture, trade and human health. Invasive alien species increase the vulnerability of native and endemic species in SIDs to extinction. From 70 per cent to 95 per cent of the world's terrestrial species extinctions have occurred on islands, and most of these were directly caused or facilitated by invasive species. However, the physical isolation of islands allows them to implement measures that prevent the establishment of invasive alien species or eradicate them after introduction. The United States recognizes the truly cross-cutting nature of threats posed by invasive alien species and the continuing need to address them on the regional and global scales. We will continue to partner with SIDs in developing methods and lessons learned in addressing invasive alien species that could be applied to non-SIDs as well.

President Obama believes that the future lies in our making the transition to a green economy. As the United States pursues multiple paths towards achieving this goal, it will continue to support SIDs in their efforts to green their economies. Many SIDs are endowed with extensive potential renewable energy resources. Renewable energy promises to reduce the dependence of SIDs on imported fuels for transportation and electricity generation that has led to severe trade imbalances. The United States continues to support technical assistance, as well as international financing efforts, including access to investment funds, to assist SIDs in developing their renewable energy resources and achieve their sustainable development goals.

President Obama is also committed to addressing climate change more broadly through the balance that he and others agreed to in Copenhagen at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The United States strongly believes that this balance must be maintained if we are to move forward on the issue. We are firmly committed to working with SIDs to put in place a robust, comprehensive and sustainable regime that delivers significant mitigation actions by all major economies, ensures that such actions are carried out in a transparent manner, and provides a framework of support for developing countries in their efforts to mitigate and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.

On this last point, the United States recognizes the significant threat that climate change poses to the development of SIDs and, for certain low-lying island States, their long-term viability. For instance, we recognize that access to clean water is made even more challenging by climate change due to rising sea levels, salt-water intrusion and changes in precipitation patterns. The economic challenge of providing adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is a serious burden for many SIDs. We take these threats seriously and are making SIDs a focus of our efforts to expand bilateral and multilateral adaptation assistance. In the fiscal year 2010-2011, we will commit $100 million to help vulnerable SIDs to adapt and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

When we met in Mauritius in 2005, we were in the middle of the immediate aftermath of the tsunami. Today, we recall other recent disasters: the earthquake that struck Haiti and the tsunami that struck Samoa, Tonga and American Samoa. In each of these tragedies, we take strength from the collective efforts of the international community to prepare and respond to the disasters. We do not know what the future holds. We can assume that we will be surprised by unanticipated events. The Mauritius Strategy provides a guide to preparing for that unknown future. The United States seeks to be a reliable partner with SIDs as they achieve their sustainable development goals and prepare for the challenges ahead.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before adjourning the meeting, let me remind representatives that round table 1, entitled "Reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening resilience of small island developing States" will take place at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 2 of the North Lawn Building. I wish participants a most productive round table discussion.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.